Liberalisation of Jewellery Import

3084. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have liberalised import of jewellery on the face of massive export of jewellery from the country;

(b) the extent of export made in the jewellery sector in the last two years;

(c) the reasons for liberalising the import of jewellery; and

(d) what action has been taken and achievements made in production and export of Pearl and how it is being encouraged/proposed to be encouraged in Orissa ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) to (c) A few provisions have been provided in the Exim Policy to allow import of jewellery/semi finished jewellery with a view to either facilitate the import of jewellery samples for research and development purposes or to facilitate repair/remake of the old or semi-finished jewellery with a view to provide necessary repair service and also enable the jewellery industry to make use of their spare capacities while providing opportunity to earn additional foreign exchange by way of making/repair charges etc. A provision has been made under para 8.2 of the Exim Policy read with para 8.88 of Handbook (Vol. 1) whereunder a Replenishment Licence for import of plain/studded jewellery items equal to 2.5% of the FOB value of exports of the preceding year, on payment of applicable duty, can be issued. A provision has also been incorporated under the "Export against Supply by Foreign Buyer" scheme under para 8.19 of Exim Policy read with para 8.43 to 8.53 of Handbook (Vol. 1) under which the foreign buyer may also supply to the nominated agencies/status holder in advance and free of charge plain semi-finished gold/ silver/platinum jewellery for repairs/remake and export. A provision has also been incorporated in the Exim Policy under the "Exports from EOUs/EPZ units" scheme given under para 8.26 of Exim policy read with para 8.73 of Handbook (Vol. 1), permitting EOU/EPZ units to import plain/studded gold/ silver/platinum jewellery for repairs and remake and export subject to a minimum Net Foreign Exchange Earning as a Percentage of Exports (NFEP) of 7.5% in case of plain jewellery and 12.5% in case of studded jewellery.

The export of jewellery during the last two years is as under :

Value (US$ million)

Year	Gold Jewellery	Non Gold Jewellery
1998-99	870.15	54.86
1999-2000	933.77	48.37

Source : Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics, Calcutta (DGCI&S) for 1998-99 and Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council, Mumbai (GJEPC) for 1999-2000.

(d) The GJEPC has informed that there is no production of raw pearls in the country. However, raw pearls are imported into India and some them are exported after processing. Regarding encouragement to export of pearls from the State of Orissa, it is stated that no State specific export promotion schemes have been formulated and various Export Promotion Schemes as given under chapter 8 of the Exim Policy are meant for over all export promotion of gems & jewellery from the country and can be utilised by any person from any State.

The export of processed pearls from the country during the last two years is as under :

Year	Value (in US$ Million)
1998-99	3.97
1999-2000	3.95

Source : DGCI&S for 1998-99 and GJEPC for 1999-2000.

Patenting of Indian Plants

3085. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Made in Indian plants get patented abroad", published in the Hindustan Times, dated 6th April, 2000;

(b) whether it is a fact that Karela (Bittergourd), Jamun (Blackberry) and Baigan (Brinjal) etc., grown and widely used in India for centuries, are going to be patented in countries like Japan, U.S. and China;